

SELF DETERMINATION AND POWER

Dear Friend,

You may be interested in an event being organised for the 10th and 11th January, 1990. Although it takes place in Glasgow it has nothing whatsoever to do with the 'European City of Culture' charade. The title of the event is SELF DETERMINATION AND POWER. We are appealing to a wide range of people whose only real link is, perhaps, a willingness to try and effect change, no matter how minimal. Those attending will include folk involved in various groups and organisations, eg. tenants' rights, anti-poll tax, anti-racist, women's aid; homeless people, claimants' union, gay rights, etc. But a good many individuals will be coming along on their own behalf, just for the sake of it.

Noam Chomsky has accepted our invitation as guest speaker and will deliver the key-note address each morning, to be followed by a general debate. After lunch (supplied on the premises by the organisers) the conference will break into approximately 15 groups of 20 people whose basic discussion will range over the issue of Self Determination and the possibilities and the obstacles to it, given the reality of everyday life. Each evening there will be a concert (with late licence) featuring both musicians and readings from participating writers. There will also be books-stalls plus space and time for individuals to run their own workshops during parts of the day (anyone interested in this should contact the organisers as soon as possible).

Chomsky's thesis, and that of the Common Sense philosophical view in general, is the apparently obvious point that people can think for themselves - 'apparently obvious' because nowadays most ruling minorities tend to regard it as dangerously subversive. 'Common Sense' takes the view that the reasoning skills which we use in our ordinary day to day life are there to be developed and applied to any subject we want, and not just subjects like 'foreign languages' 'geology' 'dog-racing' or 'criticising TV programmes' - but subjects like a country's foreign policy, or the correlation between cuts in welfare benefit and infant mortality, cuts in welfare benefit and suicide, and drug abuse, alcohol abuse, gambling abuse, suicide, local crime and violence, prostitution, madness.

For more information on the event please contact the organisers.

The SELF DETERMINATION AND POWER event is organised and supported by:
The Free University
Scottish Child Magazine
Edinburgh Review Magazine

SELF-DETERMINATION AND POWER EVENT



10 and 11 January, 1990
Pearce Institute, 840 Govan Road, Govan, Glasgow

Noam Chomsky, Professor of Linguistics and Philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and America's foremost radical thinker, will lead off the proceedings with a keynote address on Wed 10th January on the theme –

Self-Determination – a life task and a political task

Self-determination is a key issue, not just in modern Scotland, but for all peoples at all points in history. How we determine our lives as individuals, and how power is determined between groups and interests in a society, is the stuff, not only of 'politics', but of life itself.

Common sense and Freedom is the title of a day long seminar on Thursday 11th January. Led off by Noam Chomsky, the day will explore the Common Sense tradition of knowing the world. Strongly supported in Scottish philosophical traditions, 'common sense' takes the view that we innately 'know'. Consequently imperial power interests attack the common sense tradition, if only to preserve their own right to govern.

Other contributors on both days include:

Kathy Acker, George Davie, Alasdair Gray, Hamish Henderson, James Kelman, Jackie Kay, Tom Leonard, Sorley Maclean, Tom Raworth, Mandlenkosi Langa and Mongone Serote.

ALSO Other guests, members of groups who have taken part in self-determined activity, writers and musicians.

PLUS Books, workshops, stalls, exhibits, creche, catering and bar.

AND following on from each day, two evenings of music, readings and ceilidh.

COME TO ONE DAY OR BOTH

BUT BOOK EARLY!

This event is likely to be heavily oversubscribed. Applications should be received by October 31st

Organised and Supported by:

**Scottish
Child**

**Edinburgh Review
Free University**



Noam Chomsky

This is the era of the expert, the specialist, the person society pays to know. The expert is the person who gets paid a very large salary to define concepts like starvation, dampness in council housing, poverty, torture. The expert also redefines statistics such as the unemployment figures, infant mortality rates and so on. Some would argue that the real job of the expert is to obscure reality, to draw a veil over what is actually happening in the world.

Aside from his work on international politics, Noam Chomsky is a major philosopher of this century. Central to his thesis is a very basic and apparently obvious point, that people can think for themselves. Everybody can know and everybody can judge.

Another name for this is 'Common Sense'. In Scotland, as in France, there has been a very strong tradition in the philosophy of 'Common Sense' - our entire education system used to be grounded on it. But for the past two or three hundred years political power has been held by those whose vested interests are in direct conflict with the entire notion of 'Common Sense'.

Their line of thought has to justify **their right** to know what **you** need, no matter what you have to say on the subject. It also has to justify your loss of the right to argue the point. It is a philosophy that exists to ratify every form of exploitation, from colonial rule to slavery, from the suppression of trades unions to child prostitution. The history of the violation of human rights travels the same path as the history of the attack on 'Common Sense'.

It is something of a 'coincidence' that where 'Common Sense' exists, so does the idea of 'freedom'; It is no accident that Noam Chomsky's work is banned in some countries in the world, and detested by the ruling minorities in almost every other.

James Kelman

"What you often find is that intellectuals are the most indoctrinated part of the population - they are the ideological managers, so they have to internalise the propaganda. They have to believe it.

People who are independent-minded and cannot be trusted to be obedient don't make it (in journalism and the academic professions) - they're often filtered out along the way."

NOAM CHOMSKY

YES, I want to attend the Self-Determination and Power event. Please send me full details and event programme.

Send me ... tickets for **SELF-DETERMINATION - A LIFE TASK AND A POLITICAL TASK** for Wednesday 10th January, 1990 at £10 each (unwaged £6) including snack lunch.

Send me ... tickets for **COMMON SENSE AND FREEDOM** for Thursday 11th January 1990 at £10 each (unwaged £6) including snack lunch.

I need ... place(s) for children aged ... in the creche on (dates).

Send Cheques (or banker's draft in pounds sterling) for total amount and make payable to: **SELF-DETERMINATION EVENT**

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL

So that the organisers can make up balanced discussion groups as part of the programme on each day, please state your **OCCUPATION AREA OF INTEREST**

Return this form with remittance to: Scottish Child, 4 Garrioch Drive, Glasgow G20 8RP

Accommodation can be offered by the organisers. State your needs on this return, and give a day and evening telephone number.

HOW TO GET THERE

The Pearce Institute is sited adjacent to Govan Cross Shopping Centre on Govan Road. **TRAIN** If arriving in Glasgow by train at either Queen Street or Central Station, use the Underground Station at Buchanan Street, and alight at Govan Station.

BUS Govan Bus Station is at Govan Cross, and is two minutes walk from the Pearce Institute. Use bus numbers 17, 23, and 34 from Southside, and 23 & 24 (red bus) from town.

CAR Leave the M8 motorway at Junction 23, proceed down Broomloan Road (past Ibrox Stadium) to Govan Road and turn left. Adjacent parking available.

PRESS RELEASE . PRESS RELEASE . PRESS RELEASE

SELF DETERMINATION AND POWER EVENT

On Wednesday and Thursday of this week Noam Chomsky, arguably the most famous and controversial thinker of contemporary times, arrives at Govan's Pearce Institute in Glasgow to lead and take part in a 2 day discussion based on the theme 'self determination and power'. Perhaps no other thinker in the west arouses such passion as Noam Chomsky, whether as the scourge of intellectual hypocrisy and academic humbug, or as arch critic of U.S. foreign policy (he once described Henry Kissinger's "ignorance and foolishness as a "phenomenon"). Chomsky is Institute Professor of Linguistics and Philosophy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and his own contribution to the study of mind has been said to have the sort of impact normally associated with names like Galileo.

An idea of how wide ranging the area of discussion is can be gauged from the audience itself. Folk are travelling not only from places like Skye, Arran, Aberdeen; the Scottish borders, London, Bristol, Leeds and so on, there are also people making the trip from Lithuania; and three poets are arriving from Leningrad by invitation. Mandlenkosi Langa and Mongane Serote, two Southern African poets based in London are also coming, plus the English poet Tom Raworth. Other writers taking part include Alasdair Gray, Tom Leonard, Hamish Henderson, James Kelman, Aonghas Macneacail, Gus John, John la Rose (organiser of the annual Radical Black and Third World

Bookfair); the major Scottish philosopher, George E. Davie will also be taking part.

Such has been the interest in the event that co-organisers Scottish Child magazine and the Free University Group in Glasgow closed the ticket office by early December. What makes this success so striking is that the organisation has been done with very little funding (the enterprise has nothing whatsoever to do with the 'City of Culture'). Aside from some Scottish Arts Council funding for the writers involved there has been a certain amount of support by English publishers, Jonathan Cape, Secker & Warburg and Serpent's Tail; with the catering organised by community groups local to Govan, assisted by Glasgow's Scotia Bar. But mainly the event has succeeded because of the energy and enthusiasm of a large number of volunteer helpers. Both Derek Rodger of Scottish Child and James Kelman for the Free University group have described the event as "demonstrating the need people have for some means of expression beyond party politics and the usual institutionalised cultural structures". There is also the suggestion of a parallel, without over stressing things, of the struggle for self determination in other parts of the world.

The Self Determination and Power Event takes place on the 10th and 11th January; Press Conference to be held in the upstairs lounge of Brechin's Bar, Govan Road, from 1.45 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon (contact Chris Frew 041 427 4440; failing that phone 334 7388).